Step-by-Step Guide to Forming a Union

Forming a Union

Workers seeking to form a union at their workplace should talk to their co-workers to build support about issues they are facing. Often workers do this through forming an organizing committee. Workers can contact an established union for support and guidance or they may seek to organize their own independent union.

A group of workers seeking to organize a union should gather union authorization cards/petitions from their co-workers to show support for forming a union. Union authorization cards are documents that workers sign expressing their support for union representation.

Once organizers collect signed cards or petitions from their co-workers, there are generally **two paths** to follow to form a union:

Majority signup / Voluntary recognition

1. Contact a union organizer or start your own union.
2. Have a majority of your co-workers sign union authorization cards.
3. Ask your employer for voluntary recognition.
4. If your employer recognizes the union, you can begin bargaining.
5. If your employer refuses to recognize the union, you can file a petition for an election with the NLRB or you may be able to strike for recognition.

NLRB Election

1. If your employer refuses to recognize the union, you can file a petition for an election with the NLRB or you may be able to strike for recognition.
2. Have at least 30% of co-workers sign union authorization cards.
3. File a petition for a union election with the NLRB.
4. If the union wins 50% + 1 of votes cast, your employer must bargain in good faith over working conditions.

Contact Your NLRB Regional Office for More Info

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